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A SERMON AGAINST ADULTERY.

PREACHED

Upon *Sonday* the 7th. of *May*, in the Year 1671; in the Parish Church of St. *Michaels* in the City of *YORK*.

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A SERMON AGAINST ADULTERY.

MATH. V. 28.

But I ſay unto you, That whoſoever looketh on a Woman to luſt after her, hath committed Adultery with her already in his heart.

WE find by many Paſſages in this and the following Chapters, that our Saviour had much to do to free the Law of God from thoſe perverſe gloſſes and interpretations, which the Ignorance or Malice of men, aſſiſted by the ruſt and corruption of Time and Age, had faſtned to us; it being proper to the Nature of man rather handſomly to deceive it ſelf, then willingly to go againſt a Viſible light;

to frame the Law to its own desires when it finds it hard to conform them to the Law, and secretly and by little and little to change the Sense, though openly it retain the Letter.

In this state of things our Saviour now found the *Jewish* Church, wherein partly the Subtilty of their Doctours and Rabbies, partly the Tradition of the Lawyers, and practice and custome of their Courts had perverted the Law of God, understanding that loosely which was strictly delivered, and judging of that carnally which was spiritually intended: Our Saviour therefore, that he might fully comply with his Prophetical office, takes upon him to reform these Abuses, and to rectifie these Interpretations, which having done in the former Verses concerning *Murder*, he begins in the 27 verse to clear those Mistakes which had broken in upon this precept of *Adultery*; *Ye have heard* (saies he) *that it was said to those of Old, thou shalt not commit Adultery*; *But I say unto you, whosoever looketh upon a Woman to lust after her, hath already committed Adultery with her in his heart.* Where by the way we must note, that though the looking of a Man upon a Woman be onely specified, yet the looking of a Woman

Woman upon a Man is equally intended; and though Adultery be here only named, yet all the Species of it are underſtood; onely our Saviour having once inſiſted upon that particular, continues his diſcourſe to it, that ſo the Compariſon and Proportion between the outward actions of the Body, and the inward actions of the Heart (which he principally aimed at) might more evidently, and more immediately appear.

In the Words themſelves we may conſider theſe Parts, The *Crime* and the *Fact*; the *Fact* in theſe words, *He that looketh upon a Woman to luſt after her:* The *Crime* in theſe, *Hath committed Adultery in his heart.* Where

Firſt, We ſhall conſider *the Nature of Adultery in general.*

Secondly, *Adultery as it is reſtrained to the heart onely.* Then;

Thirdly, In the matter of *Fact* we ſhall conſider;

First, *The Luſting after a Woman.*

Then *The Looking upon her to luſt.*

After which (having thus explained the Terms and put the Caſe) we ſhall endeavour to reſolve, *How, and in what ſenſe this ſaying of our Saviour is to be underſtood.* All

All which, when we have done *Doctrinally*, we ſhall go over the ſeveral parts again in the ſame Order, and propoſe ſuch *Motives* to your affections as God hath been pleaſed to put into our mind.

We begin with the conſideration of Adultery in general. *Adultery*, as it is the *breach* of that Faith which is ſolemnly given in Marriage, whether it be by the *Man* or by the *Woman*, a great Sin ſure; whether in reſpect of *God*, or in reſpect of *Men*; in reſpect of *God*, who was ſolemnly invocated to be a *witneſs* of that Covenant which we wilfully violate, in the preſence of whom and his bleſſed *Angels*, and the *Church of Chriſt*, the marryed perſons mutually promiſed their *fidelity* to each other, ſo that (as the *Apoſtle* ſaies) *they have now no longer power over their own bodies*, in which they have parted with their *right* and *property*, and indeed they are now no longer their own but one anothers; and ſo true and real is this *Change*, and ſo neer and individual is this *Union*, that the expreſſion of the *Apoſtle* ſeems to be very high and *hyperbolical*, and reliſhing ſomewhat of the *Poet* and the *Lover*, when he tells us that it is *Magnum Sacramentum*, a high and a holy *Miſtery*: when he thinks it to be a fit *type* and

and *reſemblance* of that, which the moſt *ſtraining heights*, the moſt *gallant compariſons*, and the moſt *boaſting expreſſions* of our *Love* and *Poetry* together come infinitely ſhort of; and that is the *Love* and *Union* between *Chriſt* and his *Church*; an *Union* ſo neer, that it is indeed *fleſh of his fleſh and bone of his bone*, for the ſame *Spirit* that conceived *him* conceivs *that*, dwells in *that*, quickens and enlivens and moves *that*; ſo that it is not only *figuratively* and *miſtically*, but *truely* and indeed his very *Body*, as the *nouriſhment* which I receive and digeſt, and becomes *informed* with my Soul, is a *part* of my Body, ſo neer and ſo wonderful is this *Union*. And as for the *Love* of *Chriſt* to his *Church*, it is a flame as far tranſcending *ours* as the *heavenly* does the *elementary*; this is *that* that brought him down from *Heaven*, from the Throne, nay from the boſome of his Father, that *cloathed* him with our *corruption*, our *miſerable* fleſh, *debaſed* him to the form of a *Servant*, and *ſubjected* him to thoſe *mean*, but withal to thoſe *affectionate ſervices*, which all our *vain* and *mortal love* is ſo far from approaching, that it muſt *vaniſh* and *hide* it ſelf before that *ſacred* Charity both with *ſhame* and *wonder*; and all this to teach us, how *holy*

and

and *unvyolable* the *tye* and *Union*, how *pure*, how *chaſt*, how *fervent*, how *unchangeable*, how *honourable* the *Love of Marriage* ought to be.

A tranſgreſſion therefore againſt this *tye* and this *Love* muſt needs be an *heinous* ſin, *heinous* in reſpect of *God* who is made a *Witneſs* to that *Covenant*; and in this reſpect it was reaſonably done of him who excepted againſt the *teſtimony* of an *Adulterer* as againſt a Man perjured already; *heinous* in reſpect of the *perſon* who is made a party to that Covenant, with whom we ſo *careleſly* break our *faith* and *loyalty*, and laſtly very *heinous* in reſpect of our *Neighbour*, whoſe *hedge* we break down, and whoſe *encloſure* we lay waſte; whilſt we do not only *purloyn* and *defile* and *diſhonour* that which is his moſt *proper* poſſeſſion, that which is aſmuch his *own*, as his own body is his *Wife*: Not only *diſhonour* her, and her whole *Family* together, but we *invade* and *incroach* upon his Inheritance alſo by making our *Baſtard* his *Heir*; ſuborning and ſtealing into the poſſeſſion of his Eſtate the *Son* of *that* perſon, whom of all men living he has reaſon to *deteſt* for having been his moſt *cauſeleſs* but moſt *injurious* enemy. You ſee therefore the *nature* of the *Crime* here mentioned, how

how great a ſin it is in reſpect of the *Impiety* towards God, and how great it is alſo in reſpect of the *Injury* towards Men.

It comes next to be conſidered, that this *Crime* (as foul as it is) may be committed in the *heart* only: *He that looketh on a Woman to luſt after her, hath already committed Adultery in his heart.*

In his heart; that is, Though he hath not committed it in the *outward act*, but only in his *will* and *intention*, for indeed it is the *Will* only that gives the *ſtamp* and the *value* to the outward actions; the ſame *Act* in reſpect of ſeveral intentions may either be a *bloudy* murther, or an *haſty* Manſlaughter, or an *unfortunate* accident, or an *innocent* defence. *That which defiles a man* (ſaith our Saviour) *enters not into a man but cometh forth from within him, from the heart*; there's the Fountain that *defiles* the Streams, 'tis not the ſtreams that *corrupt* the fountain.

That the *Jews* at this time, had, by their *licentious* and *indulged* Traditions and Gloſſes, very much *defaced* and *darkned* this Truth, and had begot an Opinion very *common* to the Nation. That a *forbearance* of the Outward act onely was all that the *Law* of God required from them, may appear both

by the often and earnest *endeavours* of our Saviour to assert the *Divine Law* to its primitive, and genuine and spiritual Sense, and to restore it to its universal latitude and obligation upon the *spirit* of Man; as also by a passage in the 12th Book of *Josephus*'s *Antiquities*, who being himself a Learned, and a Wise and Well-born person among the people, yet takes occasion to wonder at the Errour of *Polybius* the *Grecian Historian* (as he accounts it) That the Intention only of *Sacriledge* in *Antiochus* was the *Cause* why he was pursued with *Divine Vengeance*, ending a *wicked life* with a *dispairing* and *torturing death*; as if sayes he, *God used to punish Intentions only?* So much more you see the *light of Nature* only in a Wise and un-interessed *Heathen* was able to discover, than the understanding of a *Jew* bred up to the *knowledge of the Law*, and otherwayes *Wise and Learned*; only because it was betrayed and blinded by *prejudice*, and *tradition* of his Teachers.

Josephus indeed were in the right, if we consider Man only as a *Citizen*, as a member and part of a *Community*, so his *thoughts* and *desires* can come into no accompt; no Tribunal here upon earth that can take *cognizance* or exercise *Jurisdiction* over that

that which paſſes *within a man* if it proceed not to *outward act*, as to *humane Law* he is reputed Innocent, and even in reſpect of God alſo; the *outward act* being added much aggravates the fault, draws more guilt and puniſhment upon the *offender*; both becauſe when we proceed ſo far, we give a greater declaration of our Will *fully* and *perfectly* conſenting unto ſin; and becauſe we *then* only offer Injury, and occaſion much more Sin and ſcandal unto others: yet notwithſtanding, though the *outward act* add to the *guilt*, yet it does not *cauſe* it. Our Saviours Doctrine ſtands good ſtill, *That which defiles a man proceeds from within*, there the *ſpiritual* poyſon firſt ſpreads it ſelf; the Sinfulneſs proceeds from the *obliquity* of the *actions*, from the unlawfulneſs, from the diſagreement it hath with the *Divine Law*, which ought to be the *rule* and *meaſure* of all our Actions: It is the *tranſgreſſion* of *that* that makes a *ſin*, and the *tranſgreſſion* of *that*, in this particular, that makes this *particular ſin*. The *conſent* of the Will to an *unlawful deſire* after a Woman, though no *outward act* follow after, is that *inward Adultery* which our Saviour here ſpeaketh of, and fully comprehends the *nature* of the *Crime* which I promiſed to ſhew you.

We come next to the *matter* of the *Fact* which is here double, *Lusting* and *Looking*; but first of *Lusting*.

What this *Lust* here is, though many are *guilty* of it, yet perhaps there are many also that are *ignorant* what the exact meaning of it is, that do not sufficiently conceive the full latitude and extent of it; and they may indeed be more *excusable* because it is a point that even S. *Paul* was once ignorant of: *I had not known lust*, saies he, *unless the law had said thou shalt not lust*, in the 7th. to the *Romans*. What, did did not S. *Paul* think we knew the *Commandment*? or was he ignorant of that which even *Polybius* an *Heathen* could discover, That the *inward consent*, the *intention* and *resolution* to sin, *was sin*? this certainly cannot be the meaning of this place, there must be some higher sense of it then so. S. *James* will help us to the best Exposition of it in his first Chapter and 14 verse, *Every man*, saies he, *is tempted, when he is drawn away and enticed by his own lusts*; they move blindly and suddenly to whatsoever is *acceptable* to the *Flesh* and *delightful* to the *Sense*, without any advice of reason at all, without any *subjection* to the spirit of our Mind, without any *conforming* themselves to that which ought to be the *rule* of humane

humane actions, *the Law of God.* Now certainly that which *tempts* to evil muſt needs be *Evil it ſelf*, that which is perfectly good cannot tempt us; and therefore ſayes S. *James*, God cannot do it becauſe he is ſo. Whatſoever does *tempt* us therefore muſt needs be *Evil*, for temptation to ſin being an *evil fruit* muſt needs proceed from an *evil tree*, a Tree that hath its root as deep as the *firſt ſin* of the firſt Man, and our *Original corruption* is the cauſe that there is any ſuch thing as *unlawful luſt* in us; unlawful I ſay which is therefore Evil, becauſe *unagreeable* and *unconformable* to the Law of God; therefore Evil, becauſe *rebelling* againſt the law of our Mind, and ſo violating that *order* and *harmony* which God at firſt placed in our Soul.

But that we may more diſtinctly conceive the *Luſt* that is here ſpoken of, and the true *nature* of it, it is fit that we learn it of *S. James* in his firſt Chapter and 14 and 15 verſes, where he diſcovers the *progreſs* of it, and deſcribes to us the ſeveral *ſteps* and *riſes* and *periods* of this Evil. *Every one is tempted*, &c.

Out of which Words the *Schools* have obſerved *three* ſeveral ſteps and gradations of Sin, the *Suggeſtion*, the *Delight*, the *Content*. Firſt the *Suggeſtion* which

which is not certainly (as ſome conceive) onely when either our *memory* or our *ſenſe* do propoſe to us an Object in it ſelf *delightful* to the *ſenſes*, the injoying whereof is contrary to the Law of God; but when it is propoſed to us under the conſideration of being *enjoyed*, when by the *help* and *aſſiſtance* of our *nature* and rebellious *corruption*, this very *unlawful enjoying* is preſented and ſuggeſted to our deſires, towards which the firſt motions, the ſtarts and beckenings and twitches of our *deſires*, are the firſt degree of ſin; then we are as the Apoſtle ſayes, *Drawn away by our luſts.*

The *next* is the *Delight* and *contentment* that we take in the contemplation of that *unlawful* enjoying; then Sin *conceives* ſaith S. *James*, for it conceives with *delight.*

The *laſt* is that expreſs and formal conſent of the *Will* to *exerciſe* and put in *practice* what has been thus ſuggeſted, and ſo delightful unto us; then it becomes, as S. *Paul* ſayes, ἡ ἁμαρτία ἀποτελεῖ, *compleat and perfect ſin.* And indeed theſe three degrees are not unfitly compared to the three *perſons* that acted their ſeveral parts in the *firſt ſin* of *Adam*: Namely, to the *Serpent*, the *Woman*, and the *Man.*

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The *Serpent*, there's the insinuating suggestion; the *Delight*, there's the *deceived Woman*; and the *Consent*, there's all lust; the *Man*, and then all is compleat. Now to draw our Discourse to a head, after we have thus opened the Case. The Question now to be stated and resolved is, Whether all or some only of these *degrees* are here meant by our Saviour, when he tels us, *That he that looketh upon a Woman to lust after her, hath already committed Adultery in his heart.*

Concerning the last, the *express* and *formal consent* of the *Will* to perform this sin, I have already shewed you, that it is directly and properly that which our Saviour here calls the *Adultery of the heart*; concerning the second there may seem to be some *difficulty*; I am not apt to make sins that God hath not; and I should be very shie of determining the particular, but that I find those who agree very little amongst themselves; namely, *Dominicans*, *Jesuits*, *Lutherans*, *Calvenists*; yet to agree upon this point, that that which they call *Delectatio Morosa*, namely that the *Delight* about enjoying an *unlawful Object* (if at the least it have any stay and continuance in us) is also to be put in the same rank with *Consent* it self; beeause the *Will*, though it do not *formally* consent,

consent, yet *implicitly* it does, because it does not *curb* and *restrain*, as by duty it is bound to do; It offends as a *Governour*, though not as an *Actor*; in suffering, though not in doing; and that therefore even such a *delight* in this particular sin, though we do not *fully* and *resolutely* intend and purpose to commit it, is also comprehended under this, *Adultery of the heart* here spoken of by our Saviour. Lastly, concerning the *first* degree, those sudden starts and first motions towards *unlawful acts*, though they are *evil in themselves*, yet out of Gods mercy, they are not so *imputed* to those that are in *Christ*: Not that the *nature* of them is changed, that of *evil* they should become *good*; but that the *effect* of them is changed, as to us-wards they are not evil to *condemnation*; that is, if we be *afflicted* and *troubled*, not pleased and delighted with them, they are left as the *Canaanites* were amongst the *Israelites*, to keep us *humble* towards God, and solicitous in our selves to *exercise* us, not to *ruine* us. Not that we should *yield*, but that we should *conquer* for our *virtue* and *tryal*; not for our *destruction* and *condemnation*.

You see now what this *lusting* is our Saviour speaks of; we come next to the *Looking*, *He that looketh*,

looketh, &c. Of which very briefly.

There may be several senses of these words, *he that looketh to lust*, for this πρὸς τὸ ἐπιθυμῆσαι, this πρὸς here denotes either the *event* of *looking*, or the *end* of *looking*; the *event* of *looking*, that is, he that *looketh* and afterwards doth *lust*, or the *end* of *looking*, that is, he that *looketh* purposely that he may *lust*; Concerning the latter of these, he that *looketh* purposely that he may *lust*, he that imploys his *senses* as Factors for his *lusts*, to provide fuel for that fire, and to search out objects for those *unlawful desires*, he that as the Apostle sayes, has *Eyes full of Adultery*, and therefore *looketh* that he may *lust*, of such a Person as this we shall make no scruple to determine, that he directly falls under our Saviours censure here, and is one of those that has *already committed Adultery in his heart*.

Concerning the other; he that *looketh* onely and afterwards *lusteth*, though in that *look* of his he had no such intention, yet if his *curiosity* or his *negligence* be so great, that he has no care at all of his *senses*, that suffers his *eyes* to run at randome, and makes no manner of *covenant* with them, and sets no watch upon those Windows at which death may

enter in, if he ſo *Look* that he do *luſt*, if this *event* do enſue upon him by his own default, if his ſoul be ſo like a City without Gates and Bars that all Objects are ſuffered to enter in without controul, if he have no care at all of the firſt *degree* of ſin, which is the ſuggeſtion, but entertains a Parley with this Serpent, and either *negligently* or *curiouſly* leads himſelf into temptation, if upon that ſuggeſtion there follow *delight*, and with that *delight* ſin conceives (much more if it proceed ſo far as to conſent and ſo ſin become perfect and conſummate) though I pity his caſe much more then the former, yet I dare not abſolve him from the *guilt*, but muſt render him up to the cenſure of our Saviour here, and not out of my *ſeverity*, but out of my *affection* and *care* of his ſoul and his eternal good, I muſt tell him plainly and friendly, that I do more then fear, that ſuch a *look* with ſuch an *event* enſuing, will at the Judgment ſeat of *Chriſt* be reckoned *Adultery in the heart.*

I have at the length diſcovered to you the *nature* both of the *Crime* and of the *Fact*, and have ſtated the caſe and given you ſuch reaſons as to me ſeem concluding, why and in what ſenſe this fact of *look-*

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ing after a Woman to luſt after her ought to be reputed the *Committing Adultery in ones heart.* I come next to propoſe ſuch *motives* to your affections, to avoyd this *crime* and take heed of this *Fact*, as have offered themſelves to my conſideration; and firſt concerning *Adultery.*

But what ſhall I ſay of *Adultery* in an Aſſembly of *Chriſtians*, eſpecially of ſuch *Chriſtians* as I hope and am perſwaded are here preſent to hear me? a *crime* ſo impious towards God, ſo unjuſt towards Men, ſo unclean againſt our ſelves: this is a *crime* ſayes *Job, to be puuiſhed by the Judges*, the purity of the Law of *Chriſt* needs not trouble it ſelf about ſo foul a ſin as this is, civil Laws ought to take notice and puniſh this; humane ſociety cannot ſubſiſt with this ſin: A *crime* that breaks through all *Covenants*, confounds all *Races* and *Families*, diſturbs and unſettles all *Inheritances*, and fills the whole *World* with Tumult and Madneſs and Confuſion. O my beloved Brethren, We need ſeek no further cauſe of the confuſion of this *State*, then to have this *crime* frequent amongſt us; of this ſayes our Saviour, *Dictum eſt antiquis*, long ago this ſin has been forbidden, it has been reputed abominable

ever ſince Mankind has been upon the earth, in the darkeſt times; no *Nation* ſo barbarous as not to acknowledg it, and in the wickedeſt of times (wonder not at my expreſſions) no *Nation* ſo extreamly civil as yet to forget it, even thoſe prodegies of *luſt* and *blood* the *Roman Tyrants* themſelves enacted Laws and Penalties againſt it, and therefore for my own part, methinks I find my ſelf in the ſame condition as that *Law-giver* was, who refuſed to make a Law againſt *Paricide*, becauſe he preſumed no body would commit it; and therefore he was loth to hatch it by forbidding of it, for it is of a much leſſer ſin then this, though of it ſelf great enough God knows, that St. *Paul* ſayes, *Let it not once be named amongſt Chriſtians*; and therefore of this ſin, I hope we ſhall be ſo far from the *Impudence* of naming it, that we ſhall not ſo much as have the *ſinfulneſs* of thinking of it. For let us conſider I beſeech you onely two *Motives* upon which St. *Paul* perſwades us to avoyd *Fornication*, much more *Adultery*, you ſhall find them in the firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians* (a People whoſe City was very notorious for that *Vice*) and the ſixth Chapter of that Epiſtle, the *Motives* are briefly theſe, That they

ſhould

ſhould therefore forbear that ſin, *becauſe their members were members of Chriſt*, and becauſe alſo they were *Temples of the Holy Ghoſt*. Beloved, *We* of the *Clergie*, ſay ſomthing ſomtimes concerning *Sacriledge*, and when we do ſo we are counted Fools for our labour, but whether that which we call *Sacriledge* be ſo or no, God will one day Judge, and I am horribly afraid leaſt he be Judging it already; but I ſay, be that as it will, I am ſure, that which St. *Paul* ſpeaks of here is *Sacriledge* to the purpoſe, to prophane the *Temple* of the *Holy Ghoſt*, a *Temple* which God has made, and not Man, a *Temple* in which God inhabits, wherein the *Holy Ghoſt* does truely and literally dwell and reſide, to *prophane* this, not onely to *worldly buſineſs*, but to *ſinful buſineſs*, to *luſt*, to *uncleanneſs*, to *Fornication*, to take the *members* of *Chriſt* and make them *the members of an Harlot*, as the Apoſtle ſayes, certainly my Brethren, it is the moſt rhetorical, the moſt emphatical expreſſion in the whole Bible, the *Members of Chriſt*, ſo pure, ſo holy, ſo chaſte, ſo honourable, and to make theſe the *members of an Harlot*: an *Harlot*, What's that? Why what is it but the *Common Sewer*, that receives all the filth of the Town, I humbly crave your par-

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don for my expreſſion ; it is indeed too ſhort, it is not home enough : Alas ! this receives but the *natural filthineſs*, but the other receives all the *moral filthineſs*. We would account it an horrid thing for one to take the *Body* of *Chriſt*, and tread it in the dirt under his feet, and tumble it up and down in the Kennel ; why, it is much worſe to take his *members* and make them the *members* of an *Harlot* ; a creature that is made up of Luſt and Impudence, and the abſence of all Vertue, more diſeaſed in *her* ſoul then *ſhe* is in *her* body, not onely moſt abominable to vertuous minds, but even to thoſe perſons themſelves that make uſe of *her*, nay I am perſwaded at that very time when they are carryed headlong with the violent rage of their impetuous *luſt*, and yet to take the *members* of an *Harlot*, why 'tis not poſſible the Apoſtle ſhould give a higher expreſſion then this.

Beloved, we are apt to think that our *members* are our own, that we may do what we liſt with them, but St. *Paul* will tell us, we are much deceived, *You are bought with a Price*, ſayes he in the laſt Verſe, you are none of your own : A price, what price is that ? Not thoſe *Corruptible things of Silver and Gold*,

Gold, but with the precious blood of the Son of God; and after all this coſt beſtowed upon upon us ſhall we ſo unworthily imploy that which has been ſo dearly purchaſed, ſhall we any longer ſin againſt our own bodies with this foulneſs of *Fornication*? Shall we ſo profane the *Temples* of the *Holy Spirit*, and ſo horribly pollute and defile the *members* of the body of the *Son of God*. O conſider this you that forget God, leaſt he pluck you away, and there be none to deliver you! O conſider, I beſeech you, that if you be once pluckt away from being *members* of him who is the Saviour of the *World*, there can no manner of deliverance be left either for your *Body* or your *Soul*!

I have done with this part, I pray God we have done with the ſame alſo; I come next to ſpeak of the ſecond part, which is the *Adultery of the heart*.

And of this certainly many muſt plead *Guilty*, that are *Innocent* as to the other, and indeed the *guilt* of this is ſo much leſs, as the *damnation* of one alone is leſs then the *damnation* of two together, for the *Adultery* of the body cannot be committed by a ſingle perſon, two together muſt be involved in that *guilt*, that's an aggravation that I did not tell.

tell you of before, and certainly it is a *Consideration* that will one day fall heavy, and lye like a talent of Lead upon the souls of the *Adulterers* and *Fornicators*, that when one of them is reclaimed from the errors of their way, and with bitter tears and loud cryes, with a sad contrition of soul has begged a pardon from God and made a peace with Heaven, yet the other runs still at ryot in their former sins, drenched in those habits of those *Lusts* which they have cherished and contracted together, easie to be corrupted, but not so easie to be reclaimed, the one going to life with *pardon* and *repentance*, the other with *impenitency* to death and damnation. O think, think beforehand what sad thoughts concerning this particular must one day possess you! how close, how heavy it will sit to your souls to have been the Authors of anothers *unrepented sins*, and the instruments of anothers *misery* for ever, how foul, how black, how foolish this *Wickedness* will then appear to you, that the horrour will then be so great to you, that you will esteem them to be in a degree of *blessedness* that have no sins to account for, but onely their own, and in respect of this *Adultery* of the Body, will repute it some approaching

ing towards *Innocence*, to have committed onely the *Adultery of the heart.*

How great therefore muſt the other *crime* be, in reſpect of which this here ſo condemned by our Saviour looks like *Innocence*, and indeed well does it deſerve to be ſo condemned, for alas! what thanks is it to us if we have had the *conſent* to ſin, though not the *opportunity*? If we have forborne onely becauſe we have wanted the *confidence* of ſolliciting, or the *probability* of conſenting, or the *conveniency* of attaining? If we have therefore onely been leſs *guilty* becauſe God in his mercy has not permitted it in our power to be more!

The *Will* is reckoned for the *Deed* in the ſight of God, miſerable were we if it were not ſo in our *good Works*, and therefore it is but Juſt it ſhould be ſo in our *ill Works* too; before his Eyes *All things are naked*, ſayes the Prophet, but *he tryeth the heart and reins*, ſearcheth into the inward parts and corners of our ſouls. Mans *Judgment* muſt content it ſelf with the *appearance* onely; all the *Hypotheſes*, the *Suppoſitions* that we can make here below muſt be according to the *Phænomena* onely, when we have ſalved them, and many times before

that also our busines is done, but God he sees the *course* and *order* of our thoughts, *Understands them long before*, sayes the Psalmist; Judges them by their *causes*, discerns the *spring* from whence they flow, the *end* to which they run, the *rule* by which they are measured.

O if we would take the *Omniscience*, and this *Omnipresence* of God a little more to heart, what manner of persons would we be in all holiness of *Conversation?* What foul sins would we forbear out of the awfulness to the presence of that infinite Majesty? Whereas for want of this, what a goodly spectacle think you in the sight of God are some meditating hearts?

We should account it an horrid thing, if any should be so voyd of shame as to commit *Adultery* in publick, much more if he should do it in a *Church*, much more then that if he should do it before the whole *Congregation*, and that also at the time when either our *Prayers* were offered to God, or his Message delivered to us, such an *Act* sure we should repute a *Sacrilegious Impudence*, and there would not be some *Phinees* awanting, that would be ready to strike through such a *Zimri* with

with his *Javelin*; yet in the ſight of that God that made the World, in the preſence of him who is the Judge of Spirits, how often do we commit this *Adultery of the heart*, in private, in publick, in the great Aſſembly? I will not ſay in the *Church*, at the time of Prayers, of Sermon, even of this Sermon, whileſt I am ſpeaking againſt it, and that ſome come hither onely for that very purpoſe, yet ſome there are that ſtick not to ſay ſo, I would not pray for any ſin, yet I pray God this be rather malice then Truth, but if any have been ſo miſerably *Guilty* as to come hither with ſo foul an *Intention*, I hope God has this day met him in his Way, as the Angel did the madneſs of the Prophet, and that from henceforth he will proceed no further; take heed, *Sin ſo no more leaſt a worſe thing happen unto thee.*

But I am weary of this *Dunghil*, I have dwelt too long in the ſtench of it, I paſs therefore to my third part, from the Crime to the matter of Fact, *He that looketh on a Woman to luſt after her; he that luſteth.*

And here firſt of all (that we may refreſh our ſelves with a better proſpect then we have hitherto

had) let us first consider the extream and wonderful *purity* of the Law of *Christ*, that troubles not it self about outward actions, contents not it self with the consent of the *Will*, but forbids the delight of the *Appetite*, and takes care even of the prime affections and first motions of the heart to sin, for as I told you in the beginning, though these first motions shall not condemn us, yet it is not because they are not evil in themselves, but because they are not so imputed to us; God layes not aside his *Justice*, but he takes to him his *mercy*, he sees those first motions, and he sees them as sins, but he sees the Mediatour too; Nay he both sees and hates these first motions, but it is as a Physician sees the Disease of his beloved Son, whom he does not therefore hate, because he has that Disease, he hates the Disease but he loves his Son, and would therefore destroy the Disease, that he may save the Child.

How much therefore ought we to humble our selves before this gracious God? Humble our selves before his *Justice*, when we consider our own deserts, and humble our selves before his mercy when we consider his readiness to pardon, and

and his willingneſs to amend us? How ought we to put on ſuch affections to our ſelves as he has towards us, to love our *perſons*, and to hate our *corruptions*? If we be pleaſed, if we be delighted with them, there's no hope of *cure*; nay there's no hope of *pardon*, we every minute grow ſicker and ſicker, till we are ſick unto death; if we will recover our loſt health, we muſt grieve, we muſt be angry with theſe *Luſts*, charme them away with our *Prayers*, wear them away with *Faſting*, vex them away with *Labour*, let a charitable Induſtry employ thoſe *affections* that would break out into *Luſt*; let it come forth in Fruit, that would run out in Weeds; the heart of Man will ſtill be putting out ſomewhat, if Grace work not, Corruption will; if our heart be ſuffered to be like a ſtanding Pool, we muſt expect the ſurface of it to be covered with Froth and Scumme, where there is fulneſs of Bread, and Idleneſs to boot, we muſt exſpect even the ſins of *Sodom* to follow after; God has put it into our power to avoyd or overcome theſe Temptations, by Devotion, by Auſterity, by Buſineſs; much more not to lead our ſelves into Temptation. Not to *look* upon a *Woman*, that

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we may *lust* after her, which is my last part, *He that looketh.*

And here I must not pass by a good Observation of Saint *Chrysostome* upon this Text of our Saviour, *He that looketh upon a Woman*, &c. that though at the first blush it may appear to be *Durus Sermo*, a hard saying, and we are ready to cry out with the Disciples, Who can bear it, yet if we consider it well, sayes he, it will appear to have more of Gentleness and Lenity then of Hardness and Severity: Had our Saviour indeed injoyned us to *looke*, and withall forbidden us to *lust*, it had been perhaps to many men as if he had bidden them to stand by the fire and yet forbidden them to be warm, but when he forewarnes us of our danger and shews how to avoyd it, when he tells us if we be apt to *Lust*, we should take care not to *Looke*, this sure is Mercy and Lenity, for 'tis as if a Friend should thus advise us, has Drunkenness at any time put you in danger of your life, and are you apt to be overcome with Wine when you drink it? If you have not the gift of Temperance, forbear it altogether, better

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to drink no Wine at all, then to be in Danger of Death by it; So our Saviour here, Can you not make a Covenant with your *Heart* not to *Luſt*? Why then make a Covenant with your *Eyes* not to *Looke*; I am ſure that is in your power, if you would not ſin, do not run into temptation.

But you will ſay, Why, to what end was *Beauty* made then, if it were not made to be ſeen and *looked* upon? Here's a Doctrine that turnes all things into the firſt *Chaos*, that brings darkneſs upon the World again, or at the leaſt makes light wholly unuſeful, for what uſe is there of Light, if *Uglineſs* and *Beauty* muſt be equally forborne? So wiſe we are for our own hurt, and ſo wittily as we think we Argue for our own deſtruction, the Light we know is a beautiful Creature, and *a pleaſant thing it is to behold the Sun*, ſayes *Solomon*, yet we think it very reaſonable for the Phyſician to ſay to us, Are your *Eyes* ſore? Then forbeare to *looke* upon that beautiful *Light*, and in the mean time we do not think it reaſonable for the Phyſician of our Soules to ſay to us, Are your Eyes, *Luſtful*? Then forbear to *looke* upon that Beauti-

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ful *Woman*; Yes, perhaps we begin to think it ſomewhat reaſonable, but we ſtruggle againſt it with grudging and diſcontent, juſt as the ſick man does againſt his Phyſician, that out of his care to him has ſtrictly forbidden ſuch or ſuch a meat, he thinks fit to obey at laſt, but with ſuch a repineing, ſuch a languiſhing, an unwilling obedience, as if he had now no pleaſure left in life, as if it were all one to him to refraine this and to dye, what care now has the Phyſician for ſo perverſe, ſo wrangling an Appetite, but to deal plainly with him, that he may eate if he pleaſe, but if he do he will certainly dye? So here, What, take away all pleaſure of life, no *looking* upon that beautifull Sex? as good then pull out our Eyes alſo; Right ſayes our Saviour (reſolutely ſhaking off this wrangling Sophiſtry) not onely as good, but you had better do ſo then *Luſt*, *If thine Eye offend*, ſayes he in the next Verſe, yea though it be thy right Eye, moſt dear, moſt uſefull to thee, yet *pluck it out*, though it be with paine, *and caſt it from thee*, though it be with regret, for thine Eyes were given thee for thy benefit, to direct thee in thy way; not to be unto thee an occaſion of falling,

ling, better one of thy Members ſhould periſh *then thy whole body be caſt into Hell*; if thine *Eye* be more worth then thy whole body, if to *look* with the danger of *luſting* be a greater pleaſure then the ſuffering of Hell fire be a pain, then look on and ſpare not; but if, as the Prophet ſayes, *No Man can dwell with perpetual burnings*, then ſure it is better to forbear a ſhort pleaſure then to hazzard eternal torment.

Well perhaps at laſt we are reſolved to obey this precept, yet our *Nature* is ready to cry out *Durus Sermo*, 'tis a hard task though, and to ſinful men it is ſo indeed; My brethren (I beſeech God every day to make it eaſyer to every one of us) but remember withal, that *Hell*'s an ill place, and *Heaven* is a very good one; that *Chriſt* hath performed a much harder task for our ſakes; that the buſineſs we are now upon, is matter either of eternal death or eternal life; that *Strait is the Gate, and Narrow is the Way that leadeth to that life, and few there be that find it*, that *Heaven is entred by Violence, and the Violent take it by force*, not

getting thither unleſs we offer force and violence to our *corruptions* and *luſts*, and put a curb and reſtraint upon our *natural inclinations*, a watch and a guard upon our *outward ſenſes*: I confeſs it is a hard task, but that I may make it more eaſy to you I ſhall now ſay ſomwhat to the other Sex, and I ſhall at laſt turn my diſcourſe from thoſe that *look* to thoſe that are *looked* upon.

For you are they that muſt aſſiſt in this *Cure*, and contribute your part to the obſervation of this precept of our Saviour; for as God has committed to men the protection of your *ſafety*, ſo alſo he hath intruſted to you the conſervation of their *chaſtity*. To *look* upon you (as things are carried by the cuſtome of this Country) for the moſt part lyes wholly in their power, but to *look* ſo that they may not *luſt*, that commonly lyes very much in yours; For let the fruit be never ſo pleaſant to the eye, if there be no hope that it will be fit for food, the *Serpent* will have but ſmall incouragement for his temptation; It may indeed fall out, that if *Angels* themſelevs ſhould deſcend from heaven, and appear cloathed in humane *Beauty*, there

there may not want ſuch ſons of *Belial* that may even break through a door to attempt their *chaſtity*, but theſe are the children of *Sodome*. Our Cityes have few ſuch inhabitans, few men are come to that excellency of wickedneſs as to be like *Satan* himſelf, who delights to tempt the virtuous moſt; No, no, that wretchedly miſcalled Love, that has ſeduced ſo many ſouls to their ruine: that which our Saviour calls by its true *name*, how gently ſoever we may think fit to deal with it, that which is indeed our *Idleneſs* is made our *buſineſs*, has not yet arrived to ſuch Poetical tasks as to have impoſſibility for its object; they are Fools only which ſit down to veiw a *ſtrength* which themſelves eſteem Impregnable.

A Woman certainly may if ſhe pleaſe carry her ſelf with that gallantneſs of *Chaſtity*, and be ſo fortified by a publick reputation; that even in the middeſt of a crooked generation, when weaker places are daily taken in about her, yet ſhe may ſtand alone, not only *unconquered* and *unattempted*, but even unhoped for and undeſired: She may be ſo conſecrated by her known *Virtue*, that nothing that is

vile, nothing that has but ſuſpition of *evil* ſhall dare to approach her; that we ſhall not have the confidence to dart any *Look* to her face that we would not ſend up towards *Heaven*; nor preſent any *Suit* to that Ear, that we would not bring to the *Temple* and the *Altar*: And as when we ſee a comely and magnificent ſtructure dedicated to the *Divine Service*, it adds an advantage even to pious thoughts, and ſtrikes religious *reverence* into all ſober men, whilſt the very beholding theſe things to be conſecrated to God (which were they applyed even to ill uſes, would yet retain in themſelves an inherent *excellency*) does even by our *ſenſes* lead us on to *Devotion*, and cauſes a ſecret and happy conſent and harmony between the *Spiritual* and *Senſible* part of Man in holy duties; ſo alſo thoſe perſons whom God hath built in an extraordinary manner, and indued with *Beauty* above others, if theſe I ſay, in an age and complexion and conſtitution ripe for *delight*, and ſeaſoned for *pleaſure*, ſhall yet conſecrate themſelves to God and his ſervice, by works of *Piety*, and *Charity*, and not only by an unblemiſhed *life*, but by pure and unſpotted *thoughts* preſerve themſelves either in a ſingle

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or conjugal *Chaſtity*: O what good is there that theſe perſons may not do! How many men may they conduct to *Heaven*, that might perhaps have been ſo unfortunate, as to have followed, had they led on, to *Hell*? What a teſtimony will it be to *Religion*, to ſee the beſt and choiceſt things thus conſecrated to it? How will they be like the Fat of the *Sacrafice* to increaſe Mens *Devotion*; and how exceedingly to the honour of their *Creatour*, will they be able to imploy that natural Dominion that *Beauty* enjoyes over the hearts of the Spectatours.

For, Beloved, I hope we are not ſo vain or ſo wicked, as to think that *Beauty* is none of God's Gifts, ſure if it be it may be imployed to his *Glory*, Men may *behold* it to their *Benefit* as well as *look* upon it to *Luſt*. God has not ſent it into the World as a *trap* and a *ſnare* only to do miſchief, and given it ſo great a power over the *Soul* of Man only to *deſtroy* it; No, no, We read in the *Eccleſiaſtical Story*, how great an influence towards the *Converſion* of the firſt Chriſtian King of *France*, proceeded from the *Beauty* and agreeableneſs

ableneſs of his Chriſtian *Wife*. And even in our *Engliſh Story* we find thus much, that God ſtirred up the heart of *Gregory* the Pope, to ſend *Preachers* to our *Saxon Anceſtours*, only by beholding the *Comelineſs* of ſome of the Inhabitants then Priſoners at *Rome*; and in the wonderful Providence of God, it was ſo diſpoſed, that the firſt occaſion of the *Converſion* of this Nation, was the *Beauty* of the People.

Thus you ſee God has plac'd it in *your power*, to be the Inſtruments either of much *Good* or much *Evil*; and puts it to *your choice*, whether you will lead after you a train and retinue of *Hearts*, towards Him, or towards his Enemy.

I hope none here will be Authors of a *Defection* from God; None that will be like the *Idolaters Temple*, fair and goodly *without*, but *within* contain nothing but an *Ape*, or a *Goat*, or ſome more deformed Monſter: None that ſo adorns, ſo ſets out her ſelf, that ſhe may be *looked* on, that ſhe may be *luſted* after; that even deſires to be an

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Object of the Sins of Men, and accounts it her Glory that she has been to many an *occasion* of falling; if there be, I must tell her very plainly, That the fire of *Lust* cannot be kindled without the fire of *Hell* too. If she can endure this hereafter, let her please her self in kindling that here. But I hope there are none present whom this *Admonition* may concern.

Only to those who have Learned *Christ*, I have a few more Words to say, and it is, That they will but seriously consider one expression of St. *Paul*, it is an expression which before they have heard of in this place, and it is only these Words, *As it becomes Women Professing Godliness*, that they would but throughly weigh the Emphasis of these words *Professing Godliness*: Can it stand with the Profession of Godliness to be ashamed of *Christ* before Men? When you have been conversing with him in a good Book, or a good Discourse, or a good Prayer, or a good Meditation; and lewd Company break in upon you; can it become you to be ashamed of any good *Words* as long as they are there? Not to afford one word in the behalf of

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Chriſt in that ill Company; but bluntly to ſay to him, Lord I deſire thee to leave me now, and to come again at night to me by my Beds ſide, or to morrow Morning in my Cloſet; I muſt now comply with this Company; We muſt diſcourſe who *loves* and is *beloved*, Call that *Love* which thou call'ſt *Adultery*, give it a gentler Name, put a *bait* upon the hook that it may be ſure to be ſwallowed; Or if not bear our parts of the *Diſcourſe*, yet give aime at leaſt: Let the Sin receive ſome countenance from us, and our reputation of *Godlineſs* be ſo far from giving a Reproof, that we ſhew not the leaſt diſlike, rather be rude to thee then them. Can this think you *become Women* that *Profeſs Godlineſs*.

Much leſs can it *become* you to ſuffer Men to make ſuch Addreſſes to you, as your ſelves know to be wholly repugnant to the Law of *Chriſt*, and extreamly contrary to the modeſt retyredneſs of your *Vertuous* Anceſtors; to call that Friendſhip which neither tends to *Honour* here, nor *Salvation* hereafter: If indeed it be Friendſhip, ſure we ſhall with comfort remember it at our *Prayers*,

I would we could gladly think of that and God together; however ſo it becometh *Women* profeſſing Godlineſs to do. I am ſure it doth not become them, when they might be as an Apple of the tree of life, to lead men to Bleſſedneſs, to ſuffer themſelves to be made an Apple of *Good and Evil*, to lead men into *temptation*; to be once patient to be *looked* upon, that they may be *luſted* after, rather with *Moſes* to caſt a vail over their faces, if at any time, eſpecially at *prayer* time, there be ſuch a glory in it, that it cannot be beheld without offence. Sure it will be a trouble to us one day, even againſt our will to have been an occaſion of other mens ſins, and how light ſoever we may eſteem of theſe wounds we thus make, yet all our skill will not make them up againe; No Phiſitian can cure them but the *holy Spirit* and no Medicine can heal them but the Blood of the Son of God. O conſider therefore the *words* I have handled, how great the *Crime*, how dangerous the *Fact!* If you will not conſider them, conſider at leaſt, who it is that ſayes here, *I ſay unto you.* I who love your

Souls more then all the *World* does your *Bodyes*; I who certainly underſtand your *Sins*, for I have borne them all, and exactly weighed the leaſt of them; Laſtly, I who muſt Judge thoſe ſins and give ſentences upon them, according as my ſelf and not any of you have named them; Conſider I ſay what it is that is *Spoken*, and who it is that *Speaks* it, and I doubt not but your Practice will be thereafter.

FINIS.